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ABSTRACT

Personal observations as a writing instructor, combined with the findings of many experts, point to the fact that all children need to learn and internalize a "writing process" in order to master composition on an adequate level. Learning disabled children, who may possess several processing difficulties, have severe deficits to overcome with the written language and are dependent upon a resourceful instructor. Beyond the selection of topics and provision of a nurturing environment in which to write, teachers can supply students with a definite purpose to enlarge upon and an audience to write towards. Students need to establish the habit of writing in order to become comfortable with the process. Because writing is a cognitive skill, any problems should be addressed developmentally. Until disabled students have successful experiences with the written language, the process of being able to communicate on paper will never take hold. Elementary classroom teachers must become aware of the crucial role they hold in structuring and enriching all children's writing strategies. (Sample directed learning objectives, a table of the scope and sequence of skills in written composition, a comparison of the composing processes of unskilled and skilled writers, a summary of the creative and utilitarian aspects of writing, and 27 references are appended.) (MM)

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The Importance of Teaching the Writing Process to the Learning Disabled Child

or

"What's an Elementary Classroom Teacher to Do?"

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Elementary Methods Research Report

Sangamon State University
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Abstract

Results of studies conducted by a variety of concerned professionals in the many disciplines prove that all children must learn and internalize a "writing process" in order to master composition on an adequate level. Learning Disabled children, who may possess several processing difficulties, have severe deficits to overcome with the written language and are dependent upon a resourceful instructor. The writer's observations as a writing instructor on several levels was integrated with the findings of many experts, who maintain that children must internalize the written structure of the language very early or they face severe difficulties using the written language with any facility later. Elementary classroom teachers must become aware of the crucial role they hold in structuring and enriching all children's writing strategies.

The Importance of Teaching the Writing Process to the Learning Disabled Child
or
"What's an Elementary Classroom Teacher to Do?"

Introduction

Effective sixth grade language arts teachers realize their students will be making major changes in their educational situations during the following year upon entering seventh grade. Because intermediate and secondary education rely so heavily on written assignments to measure success, these instructors are concerned, and rightly so, about how best to teach composition of the written word to the wide variety of students who comprise a typical class.

Professional literature is zealously filled with processes and reasons for teaching writing by one 'proven' method or another. Unfortunately, the learning of the writing process is developmental, not something rote and certain. Writing skills cannot be learned like multiplication facts. The avenue for learning a useful writing process strategy must be conceptual and must overflow positively in other cognitive areas for the students. In fact, Farris (1987) suggests that competency in both thinking and writing tasks can be facilitated by "designing sequenced writing assignments that move developmentally through Bloom's taxonomic levels" (p. 33).

Additionally, like other conceptual skills, the process of gaining competency in written composition is individually achieved during different ages for all children. The majority of a class are at different stages of skill in the writing process, but because of the nature of the educational system, all of the students and their widely differing levels of writing

competencies must be assimilated in the same sixth grade classroom. The teacher's challenge is to make actual strides in writing, despite the diversity and variety of the children's skill levels. While some students are already very proficient at the sixth grade level in their writing capacities, others still have fundamental problems in their written English, a situation which produces major obstacles for the classroom teacher to overcome in order to provide a true learning experience for all.

Unfortunately, in every classroom several sixth graders are Learning Disabled (LD) children, or children who exhibit a "discrepancy between expected and actual achievement in one of more areas, such as spoken, read, or written language, mathematics and spatial orientations" (Kass and Myklebust, 1969, as cited by Lerner, 1971, p. 9). These students appear to be doubly punished at this point in their school experience. Not only do they already possess "one or more significant deficits in essential learning processes requiring special education techniques for remediation" (Kass & Myklebust, 1969, as cited by Lerner, 1971, p. 9), but as a direct result, these students may be one or more grade levels below their peers in the sixth grade; they may have to leave the classroom to work with the LD teacher during crucial times in the day, and usually, their processing difficulties make it impossible to keep up with the rest of the class in all content areas. The direct consequences are that they are often weak in their schoolwork; their composition skills are inadequate to meet the pace of the sixth grade, and their handicaps become increasingly difficult to diagnose thoroughly and often impossible to treat adequately. Obviously, these factors can contribute to their lowered self-esteem. Sadly, their classroom teacher's estimation of their abilities and understanding of their situation may be even lower than their own.

Johnson and Myklebust (1967), noted LD researchers, remind educators of

the unsettling fact that with "maturation and proper instruction" normal students can learn to communicate with the written word, but often LD children who have normal mental facilities and sometimes, above average individualized instruction, often fail to learn the process [even under the best of circumstances]. They propose that the basis for the failure needs to be located as soon as possible and requires complete diagnosis for effective remediation (p. 195). Making the proper diagnosis and then deciding on effective remediation can sometimes take much time, as problems are often difficult to discern. Realistic remediation may be as difficult to implement. Moving as soon as possible through necessary forms, tests, evaluations, and curriculum revisions may not be fast enough in a usual school situation to affect changes that can prevent potential LD children from failing before they are eligible to receive the help they desperately need to achieve true potential.

Learning Disabilities is a terse term that covers a wide spectrum of problems that may exist in a learner's processing manner. Although many professionals are attempting to locate disabilities and provide suitable treatments, it is a slow process with many dead-end avenues. In fact, it seems that the scope of the myriad of problems has only enlarged since 1967 when over 300 interested professionals attended a conference on "Perceptual and Motor Abnormalities and Learning Disabilities", and it was reported that "distinct differences in opinion exist[ed] among the various disciplines concerning the nature of learning disorders and the proper approach to therapy for and the management of the underachieving child" (Carter, 1970, p. ix). Concurrently, those "differences [were] magnified by diversities in professional jargon and by sectarian attitudes" (Carter, 1970, p. ix). Even today, while researchers in many disciplines debate disabilities, their

diagnosis, and treatment, LD students are still caught in the middle. These students must function at grade level in the normal classroom in most of their written school work and try to make progress on individual problems in the LD resource room. Essentially they are students on the run, sometimes traveling amidst battle zones resulting from the differing opinions among classroom teachers, LD teachers, parents, and the administration.

The purpose of this paper will be to examine instruction of a suitable writing strategy for children and how the teaching of an effective writing process should be modified for any LD children, who essentially must be those children who cannot produce written composition that is developmentally able for their specific grade. These children may be actually labeled LD or invisible LD, but it is the responsibility of the classroom teacher to assist all children to progress in their written communications skills as far as developmentally possible. It is hoped that by evaluating average children's interest in writing, current writing instructional strategies, and recommended LD considerations, more children can profit and become as skilled writers as their cognitive abilities will allow.

Children and Writing

Most observers, and some teachers, would disagree with the idea that "children want to write" (Graves, 1983, p. 3). However, nonbelievers should really look at young children and how they often have the incessant need to scribble or mark on any surface with any type of marking instrument. These same children often cite "learning to write" as a goal when they start kindergarten. Graves (1983) believes that the child's marks say, "I am" (p. 3), but sadly, our schools and writing curricula seem not to support and enhance our children's initial love of written communication.

Americans have become increasingly alarmed by the poor writing skills

children possess when they have finished high school. As a result, many studies have been undertaken to try and find reasons for the children's lack of knowledge in this area. Remedial writing workshops for teachers and students and hundreds of proposals have resulted from the studies, but even now "older students' writing skills--though they have improved in the past several years--are still only good enough to match the skills of students in the early 1970's" (National Assessment of Educational Progress cited in National Education Association, 1986-1987, p. 26). The National Assessment of Education Progress Executive Director, Archie E. Lapoint, (1986) has also lamented, "the nation's elementary and secondary students still do not write well" (cited in Vukelich & Leverson, 1986, p. 255).

Graves (1983) maintains that the schools, instead of encouraging and assisting children in their quest to learn to write, in fact, promote the feeling of "No, you aren't" to the children's earliest attempts which philosophically said, "I am" (p. 3). Graves has adeptly described the process that is taking place in many schools today during writing lessons:

> We ignore the child's urge to show what he knows. We underestimate the urge because of a lack of understanding of the writing process and what children do in order to control it. Instead, we take the control away from children and place unnecessary road blocks in the way of their intentions. Then we say, "They don't want to write. How can we motivate them?" (1983, p. 3)

As Graves has so aptly concluded, at least part of the disenchantment of students' wanting to write has occurred because "writing has often been synonymous with learning a set of skills. While the basics of written communication are certainly a necessity, the importance of expression cannot be overlooked" (D'Alessandro, 1987, p. 521), as obviously it often is. Raines (1986) found, when working with young writers, that "the literacy events were

fraught with children expressing their emotional needs as they learned; therefore, teachers must provide comfort, reassurance and confidence-building activities" (p. 263). Young writers must be treated as individuals when learning the writing process because of their need to internalize the process in order to learn it well. The Early Childhood and Literacy Development Committee has suggested that the "primary goal should be to do whatever possible to help child learn to read and write fluently and to develop lifelong reading and writing habits" (1986, p. 824).

In many other areas of the academic process, educators teach a concept by enlarging upon a basic need for proper development in children, which is the inherent need to play or to enjoy themselves using their curiosity to enlarge their knowledge of the world. While promoting "play" or "enjoyment" in some areas of the curriculum, too often these same educators curtail children's enjoyment of writing by turning it into a drudgery of rules, faults, and criticisms. Writing teachers of young children would do well to remember that "The connection between play and writing is a rich one for children. . . when their play becomes their work, children find it particularly meaningful and satisfying" (Rensenbrink, 1987, p. 602). Rensenbrink emphasizes that when writing is 'play' for children, they are allowed and encouraged to bring their own interests into the classroom, and then the writing process links the developmental process of writing with the rest of their world (1987, p. 602). Thus, writing becomes more than rules and grammar and can be truly enjoyed and internalized for future growth and use.

The Writing Process

The writing process is a measured, distinct situation in which communicators select written symbols and arrange them in an orderly fashion to convey pre-selected messages efficiently to others. Unlike some content

areas, the writing process is essentally a cognitive method which must be practiced, enlarged, and improved upon within many levels, in order to expand. Although oral and written language utilize similar grammatical structures, the the written product is intrinsically different from the oral syntax. The ability to recognize and explore this difference, along with others, is what often divides unskilled writers from skilled writers.

Incredibly, however complicated the actual composing process may first appear, children, who know little of the actual steps of the ideal composing arrangement, instinctively yearn to "write". Unfortunately, children are not often allowed to follow their own cognitive intuition, but instead are forced to adapt to their current teacher's philosophy of writing. Students are very perceptive when it comes to assessing teachers and "if writing is taught as a skill which produces a measurable product, the children will try to figure out what the correct product is and aim for that" (D'Alessandro, 1987, p. 521). As a result, they will not run the risk of receiving a lowered grade for a writing product that may be more creative or done differently from what the teacher originally requested. Obviously instructors must try to facilitate, not impede, children's ability to use the written language adeptly because deep imprints are left on children's attempts at the writing process long after they have left that classroom.

For this paper, the writing process is concerned only with the actual composition that appears in written form although this process itself is in fact "composed of several acts that take place simultaneously" (Walshe, 1987, p. 23). Writers must be concerned with the pre-writing concentration skills that evolve from "handling, the manipulation of the pen; depicting, the forming of the letter, spellings, punctuation marks; restating, the shaping of selected innerspeech; and scrutinizing, the continual reading back before

writing on" (Walshe, 1987, p. 23). Although the writing of composition consists of handwriting, grammar, general neatness, and other abilities, the actual thinking process of composing thoughts on paper is what is being referred to in this discussion when the difference between "process and product" is being evaluated.

One well-known writing process version consists of specific instructional strategies that involve pre-writing, writing, revising, publishing, and sharing. The order of these steps may change according to the needs of the assignment. Historically, much debate has erupted about the nature of the the writing process and whether or not the final outcome should center around the process that was used to achieve the outcome or the product that evolved, such as a theme or essay. Generally classroom teachers might want to structure their writing instruction around a common-sense view that Walshe (1987) has proposed beyond process alone. He claims that contrary to popular feeling, no "cookbook writing process" actually exists, and the teacher's main role is "to help students explore their own way to a confident control of what is loosely termed 'my individual process'"(Walshe. 1987, p. 22).

Developing an individual process for all students which enlarges upon what is already known about writing is not something that happens overnight, and Walshe (1987) often reminds teachers that "time is vital in order to produce something valuable" (p. 22). Helping children to learn their own writing survival strategies, as well as writing purposefully, cannot be done haphazardly or quickly. Instructors must realize that the mere acts of "finding and focusing a topic, anticipating audience needs, generating ideas, and organizing information" all may require time from other classroom activities (Morocco and Neuman, 1986, p. 244), but "experienced writing teachers learn to value the invisible aspects of the writing process as much as the visible . . . as writing is never only writing. At its best, it is a

collecting, connecting, clarifying discovery process" (Walshe, 1987, p. 22).

Walshe's excellent linking process for writing happens rarely in many classrooms. Just the selection of a writing topic for their students can be the biggest hurdle for many elementary teachers, and often, they have a hard time thinking of any interesting topics to spark children's interests. Additionally, no matter how the topic is selected, research has proven lower elementary instructors have an easier time finding a suitable topic for their children than do upper level elementary teachers, "simply because as children grow older they become more discriminating in what is and is not of interest to them. Further, boys are frequently interested in topics at all grade levels in which girls are not, and vice versa" (Blake, 1973, cited in King, Emans & Cianciolo, p. 172).

Teachers should not give up if they find student resistance to their pre-selected topics. Researchers have also discovered that, with proper motivation, children often can find their own fruitful topics. In addition, giving children an opportunity to select topics in which they are interested is very positive because "children will write best about those topics in which they are interested (Blake, 1973, cited in King, Emans & Cianciolo, p. 172). Some instructors even encourage student folders in order to avoid the "I don't know what to write" syndrome; students may begin to keep their writings and list of topics in a folder. The folder will provide topics that are "all based on personal experiences rather than fiction, because what is well known can be more easily written about and explored by an emerging writer" (Calkins, 1983; Graves and Hansen, 1983 cited in Silvers, 1986, p. 85). Lastly, in terms of measured success, writers who are able to make their own topic selection often make the most significant growth in both information and skills.

Topic selection can also become less of a chore if instructors remember that "children will write best about those topics which are more closely related to their experiences . . . the teacher has only to identify those situations with which they can emotionally identify" (Blake, 1973, cited in King, Emans, & Cianciolo, p. 173). No doubt exists that topic selection is one crucial aspect for valuable writing, but productivity is also enhanced by other teacher responsibilities. Graves (1983) believes strongly that writing instructors must do more than merely select a topic and hope it works.

Writing instructors, in fact, have the responsibility to "know" their students if they can ever hope to provide experiences that children can relate to and enlarge upon in the written form. He reminds teachers that their ten-year-old students are experiencing very different childhoods from what might be imagined. These students in all probability have changed schools, suffered though one or more divorces, have relatives who live miles away, may have to get themselves and younger siblings off to school, have cable television instead of babysitters, may know someone in junior high or high school who is pregnant, or may smoke dope (Clark, 1987, p. 7). Graves expands upon this feeling with concrete suggestions and promotes the idea that teachers can never hope to provide anything close to an effective learning situation if they do not know the children individually. Successful writing teachers let children help each other in the selection process, realize that "dry" periods can happen to any writer, publish children's completed works, promote daily writing in classroom folders in order to save ideas for future use, organize the classroom for effective writing and model to the class good writing attitudes and actions (p. 31, 34).

As a result of the developmental nature of the composing process, all "classroom writing [should be] either learning to write or writing to learn" (Walshe, 1987, p. 220). Students learn to write in a variety of ways, and

reading is an important aspect. All language processes, and especially reading, are crucial factors of an effective writing program and should be highly stressed in the classroom (Britton, 1970; Squire, 1983; Stotsky, 1983 cited in Flood, Lapp, and Farnon, 1986, p. 558). Squire (1983) analyzed this relationship between reading and writing and states that "composing and comprehending are process-oriented thinking skills which are basically interrelated. Our failure to teach composing and comprehending as process impedes our efforts to teach [students] how to think" (cited in Flood, Lapp, & Farnon, 1986, p. 581).

Writing also influences reading skills. Children begin to learn about the structure of a text not only from reading, but also "by attempting to write text itself. . . they gain insight into the fact that writers organize their information to maximize the reader's comprehension" (Flood, Lapp, Farnon, 1986, p. 558). Conversely, when students fail to construct their texts in such a way as to allow the reader to understand their meaning, they can better understand why the reader cannot gain the intended message (Flood, Lapp, & Farnon, 1986, p. 558). Reading and writing are great influences on each other, and teachers must always remember to utilize their linkage.

Oral language is also important, and students should be "allowed to talk widely about the topic before writing" because "linguists have shown us that writing is a secondary form of our language--speech itself is the primary form. It logically follows that the secondary form will have to be patterned after the primary form. The secondary form can only be improved by working to improve the primary form" (Blake, 1973, cited in King, Emans, & Cianciolo, p. 173-174).

An able instructor must never lose sight of the major goal of the writing program which is to aid students to develop individual writing programs that

work the best for each. "Behind all writing is the student who is learning how to learn, how to engage thoughtfully with a problem, wrestle with it, make discoveries, compose these discoveries and refine them" (Walshe, 1987, p. 22). Students, who are lucky enough to have teachers who can encourage them through this mode of thinking and writing, will soon develop important abilities in using the written word effectively in many situations.

Teachers should be well acquainted with the basic processes of writing and the considerations that a writer must make in order to effectively communicate. For instance, all writing should possess the basic ideas: voice, content, and audience. Although it is hard to explain these concepts to children, until the content and audience have been determined, it is very difficult to decide on the writing "voice" or tone the writer should assume. Children may also need some direction in deciding upon the purpose of the piece. Vukelich and Leverson (1987) feel that the children must decide on the purpose and must realize that a world exists beyond the classroom and can be addressed. "Once the audience is defined, the teacher can help the children form inferences about their audiences's needs . . . knowing the purpose and the audience can serve to guide the decisions children make while they are writing and to define the directions of their revisions" (p. 260). Basic writers often lack knowledge of written "voice"; however, eventually they become more conscious of this aspect of writing. Once their written work at the finished level shows results of editing, revising, and rewriting, "they are on the road to a revision of their inner voice. When they can draw on that voice to produce the language of writing as though it were one of their natural languages, they will no longer be basic writers" (Bank, 1984-1985, p. 38).

The final part, revision, is the vital step of the writing process that is so misleading for many students. Revision should consist of active thought

and participation in a process whereby every aspect of the written composition is examined. For most students, it is the last minute adding of a comma or the erasing of a word. They never truly understand that it is an integral part of the writing process, and that until they use it thoughtfully, their writing will always be rather unfinished. Writing specialists show revision to be the area in writing where every aspect of the writing process is looked at critically. The students need to make decisions on word choices, sentence structures, and audience understanding. Calkins (1983) suggests that "the revision process involves toying with options in the mind and then trying things one way and then another. . . the writer moves between writing and reading, between involvement and distance" (cited in Vukelich & Leverson, 1987, p. 255). Instructors must also understand the revision process if they are to help their students in what is often the weakest area of the entire writing process. "Teachers need to help children feel the dissonance and tension that might cause them to want to make changes in their writing. Teachers need to instruct children in how to read--and reread--their texts to determine what has been written and what needs to be altered or developed" (Vukelich and Leverson, 1987, p. 256). In conclusion, Vukelich & Leverson feel that the one of the strongest elements in increasing children's written expression is that of "teachers knowing how to teach revision and children knowing how to make revisions" (1987, p. 256).

DeGroff and Leu sum up the recommendations of many experts in the writing field and suggest the "process-approach" instruction method as a sound writing strategy because when this is used correctly, all students at all grade levels write often, personal narratives are used as writing topics, and the processes of learning how to write are emphasized in evaluation rather than the product that was achieved. "According to this perspective, several components of the

writing process need to be incorporated into writing instruction: selecting topics, prewriting, sharing, revising, and publishing." (DeGroff and Leu, 1987, p. 254)

Indeed, the role of the instructor is paramount for developing an individualized program for each student. Because the student is dependent upon the writing teacher, "teachers can answer children's questions only if they know the writing process from both the inside and the outside" (Graves, 1983, p. 220). Westwood has found that most able children and even slow learners who have reached a constructive level of writing will enjoy creative writing, but "for the child with severe difficulties in this area it can be a highly frustrating activity with little reward; much direction from the teacher is vital for such a child in the early stages of writing development, if the activity is to be meaningful and if it is to lead to any progress" (1975, p. 64). Beyond the selection of topics and provision of a nurturing environment in which to write, teachers who want true growth in their students' skills must supply them with a definite purpose to enlarge upon and an audience to write towards (Vukelich and Leverson. 1987, p. 256). This direction is the least an instructor can provide. Finally, writing teachers should practice their own writing skills. Clark (1987), who has had monumental successes with his students in teaching them to write using a newspaper format, has suggested that "instructors should write with their students. . . confer with them and get them talking about their writing, and . . . emphasize real-life writing over fiction and fantasy" (p. 3). In conclusion, writing instructors who wish to produce quality writing experiences for their students' benefit must "practice, practice, practice . . . true reform comes through being brave, rolling up the sleeves and working with the students" (Clark, 1987, p. 255).

Learning Disabled Children and Writing

> A typical school class includes two or three children who are destined to become educational discards unless their learning disabilities are recognized and diagnosed and ways are found to help them learn. Although children with learning disabilities are not deaf, many cannot listen or hear normally; although they are neither retarded in mental development nor deprived of educational opportunities, they cannot learn and may develop personality and social disturbances. Moreover, many of these youngsters exhibit other behavioral characteristics which make them disruptive in the classroom and at home. (Lerner, 1971, preface)

Unfortunately for LD children who are having difficulty writing compositions, individualizing this process is one of the most difficult skills to teach even average children. As a result, classroom teachers often feel inadequate to aid normal children, much less those who have processing problems. Conversely, LD teachers sometimes also feel inadequate to tutor children for expressive language difficulties because of the nature of teaching writing. One local LD teacher expressed the apparent fear by remarking, "we try to get the children able enough to participate in the regular classroom where the language arts teachers can take over, and then those teachers who know what they're doing can help those kids." The result of this type of thinking is that "many LD students continue to be constrained by an undefined curriculum which may be as disabling as the cognitive deficits themselves" (Roit & McKenzie, 1985, p. 258).

These children are simply in the middle. As if this situation were not enough, not all children who possess writing disabilities are recognized, categorized, and helped with extra resource situations. Those who are not labeled, but do possess difficulties, are therefore left on their own to get

by as best they can under, at best, trying circumstances. They may be weak in several writing areas or just a specific one. For example, "some children . . . will never learn to spell by phonetic or structural generalizations" (Personke, 1973, cited in Kind, Emans, & Cianciolo, p. 157). Children with processing impairments are at the mercy of compassionate and knowledgeable classroom teachers who must provide other options if these children are to learn to write efficiently. Obviously, not all are lucky enough to have this bonus.

Additionally, LD children do not have the time to wait for someone to perhaps discover and remediate their problems. "By the time a child is eight years old, it is too late to compensate for arrested development by following the normal pattern of learning to speak first, then read and write" (D'Alessandro, 1987, p. 517). Hence, the real problem is often compounded by disabilities in other language areas which contribute to the lack of writing abilities. Johnson and Myklebust (1967) point out that "since the written is the last form of language learned by the child, it is apparent that disabilties in other areas of verbal behavior can interfere with its acquisition" (p. 195). In fact, merely attempting to drill these disabled learners in an actual writing process, which, on the surface might appear to be the answer, is often futile, because their deficits do not allow the process to take hold. Research has proven that there is "little transfer of direct instruction techniques to the area of writing for LD students" (Roit & McKenzie, 1985, p. 258).

As has been discussed earlier, the writing process is a difficult area to teach, and problems encountered by so-called normal students in the writing process are only intensified in LD students. Measured achievement by students in average classrooms and reported in national reports suggests "that [all]

students need to be provided with more writing opportunities. . . should write extended forms of discourse rather than isolated words or unconnected sentences. . . and instructional attention should be directed toward writing processes rather than writing products" (DeGroff & Leu, 1987, p. 254). DeGroff and Leu (1987) also feel that a writing process approach can remedy these concerns, because a process approach allows "all students at all grade levels to write often, . . . and write forms such as personal narratives" (p. 254). Although Walshe is a notable exception, many researchers also believe that the "process or learning-to-think-about-how-to-write approach" can address some of the issues of children learning to write and should be used in all classrooms and with LD students. The process approach encourages students to use active thinking strategies to write, and this in turn, moves students beyond worrying about the finished product and allows them to learn how to internalize the writing situation which actually improves their writing.

A major portion of learning the writing process moves beyond mere writing; it moves into the area of realizing that communication with others is valued. In working with LD children, instructors should remember that LD children's writings may be much weaker than most of those students they are grouped with because "although there are differences in the growth patterns of normal children, those with learning disabilities often have a much greater degree of variability in performance" (Johnson and Myklebust, 1967, p. 195). After years of frustration, these children must be taught that their writing, although perhaps weak at the moment, is as important as anyone's. Instructors working with these children must realize that these children have "reach[ed] these conclusions [that they can't write] because of the way they are taught, and what they hear from parents and other children" (Graves, 1983, p. 195). The feeling that they "can't" write often overshadows any confidence they may have that they indeed might be able to compose anything worthwhile.

Morocco and Neuman (1986) have found that "although learning disabled children's mechanical and spelling problems often receive the most attention in remedial settings, . . . students lack the cognitive strategies more experienced writers use for managing these basic writing processes. This lack of facility with the basic mental processes needed in writing is usually coupled, by the fourth grade, with anxiety about failing school" (p. 244). Graves (1983) adds that these students never seem to reach the "developmental stage where aesthetics and conventions are very important to them. The important thing is that these children believe such issues are barriers to 'knowing', to composing. Unless the issues are dealt with, along with the discovery of what they know, these children will not progress as writers" (p. 195).

Along with LD students, all students are harmed by this inefficient writing instruction. NAEP Executive Director Archie E. Lapoint (1986) suggests that "teachers [have corrected] their students' papers for spelling and grammatical errors and students perform well on these assessments. [Unfortunately,] teachers neither discuss the content of the papers with their students; nor do they ask them to rewrite--or revise--passages to make the writing clearer. Hence, students do not perform well in this area." (cited in Vukelich & Leverson, 1987, p. 255). In short, "skills are very important provided they are not studied in isolation of what information the children know . . . the older children get, the more they internalize the problems of conventions, the more these become issues standing the the way of their composing" (Graves, 1983, p. 195). Roit and McKenzie (1985) have concluded that a remedial writing program should be "characterized by an integrated, rather than hierarchical approach, [and] would emphasize the importance of the clarity of thought and the meaning of the message across the curriculum" (p.

259). Obviously, this is directly opposite of how many remedial programs are constructed. "It is generally only after the mastery of these "window dressing" skills has been achieved that efforts are focused upon content and meaning" (Roit & McKenzie, 1985, p. 259).

D'Alessandro (1987) has had exceptional success using a writing process approach with severely emotionally-disturbed children who had a variety of disabilities and weaknesses. Contrary to what might be expected, D'Alessandro believes "the writing process is a perfect way to approach the situation" (p. 517). Through writing, her students were able to express themselves first and not become frustrated by the communication process (such as by verbal outbursts) like they had in the past. The students appeared to need the structure and time to vent their feelings in a constructive manner. She had already found her students' problems and feelings could not be written about successfully if too much emphasis was placed on skills alone. D'Allessandro reflected on her students past writing experiences: "They are convinced they have nothing worth writing and they spin their wheels endlessly over spelling and 'getting it right'." The writing process gave me the structure to teach them to express feelings first, revise and correct later" (1987, p. 517).

Graves constantly reminds instructors that "the process of helping children realize that their speaking or writing is worthwhile is a slow one" (Graves, 1983, p. 216). Graves suggests that instructors should help the children to realize that they can master the the written form of communication by completing it in such a manner that it can be well understood by others. The "specific teacher response to their writing, the provision for publishing and the response of other children gradually convince writers they have something worthwhile to say" (1983, p. 216).

For instructors who are just venturing into teaching writing through a process approach, Dawson (1963) has suggested a developmentally-sound sequence

for LD children. These steps can be used for one writing assignment or many, as they involve nearly all of the weak writing areas a child might need to strengthen for schoolwork. The steps consist of composing and dictating, so the student can develop organizational language skills; teacher-directed and monitored copying, in order to use visual motor and handwriting skills to learn to write freely; dictation, where after a child has written and copied, then the child recalls the story while the teacher dictates; rewriting the same story without dictation from the teacher; and practice in all types of writing so that it will become a skill (cited in Lerner, p. 201-202). The point of these exercises is to make all parts of the writing process become more automatic so "success is immediately accessible--a very necessary condition for children with low self-esteem and shaky egos" (D'Alessandro, 1987, p. 517).

In conclusion, in order to learn to write, students must establish the habit of writing. The more they write, the more comfortable they become with the process. One technique that has been used succcessfully is "Sustained Spontaneous Writing", which has been modeled after the program "Sustained Silent Reading". The major goals of the program are to give children time to write and to encourage them during the formulation of ideas and process of putting those ideas down on paper. Three crucial aspects of the program are to "give opportunity for the growth of novel thoughts and ideas", "to allow the student freedom to express thoughts and feelings that will not be evaluated by anyone", and lastly, "to practice mechanical skills of handwriting" (Bromley, 1985, p. 24). Moore, Jones, and Miller (1985) sum up the effect of SSW: "Writers, like readers, need practice in order to develop independence. SSW provides not only practice, but it promotes proficient and independence in writers" (cited in Bromley, 1985, p. 23).

Another aspect of practicing writing has included the use of computers which have been added to the curriculum for some LD children. Three schools in Florida began the pilot program "Writing to Read" which has since spread across the nation. Based on computers, this program is used for kindergarten/first grade students and consists of using writing to learn to read. "To these schools, writing to read is a philosophy. When children begin writing and reading simultaneously, a symbiotic relationship appears to be established in which each process is stronger than either could be alone" (Spillman and Lutz, 1986, p. 265). This program is a perfect example of how some instructors have attempted to bridge the present gap between reading and writing which experts pointed out earlier in this discussion as being vitally important.

It would appear that since computers and computer programs are becoming more readily available in many schools, they are rapidly becoming a widely-used resource tool for LD children who have expressive language difficulties. Morocco and Neuman (1986), experts in this field, have offered computer instruction as a remedy for some students, "particularly for learning disabled children, who struggle daily with the process of writing" (p. 243). Part of the problem with writing is the physical act itself, and sometimes a change in the tools used can help. Writing with the usual instruments is different from entering text on a computer and may offer more suitable options for the LD student. Morroco and Neuman feel strongly that the importance of the computer is not that words are written, but that "it creates a special kind of writing environment" (1986, p. 246). They believe word processing has the advantage of enabling children to "to manage mechanics by erasing and replacing words easily", "to stimulate collaborative activities among children", "to give children with impaired social communication a channel for expressing ideas", [and] "to strengthen their self-image" (Morocco & Neuman, 1986, p. 243).

They argue that the "ease of entering and erasing text facilitiate the actual motoric writing process of the child" (Morocco & Neuman, 1986, p. 243). Other excellent features for LD children include "the "public" character of word processing and the readability of print, [as these] facilitiate teaching techniques which are highly beneficial for the anxious, low-writing child." Many of these features appear to be unique to the word processing environment and would rarely occur when children are writing at their desks with pencils. It could be argued that "the most useful aspect of the word processor for learning disabled students lies not so much on the student's writing as in the access it gives the teachers to the child's writing process." (Morrocco, & Neuman, 1986, p. 243).

However word processing is not altogether perfect for all aspects of the LD children's writing processes, and the negative aspects must be incorporated. It appears that when "composing, children stay highly involved in writing and produce rich first drafts", but when children "practice isolated skills or focus on editing during the composing of early drafts, they tend to become disengaged from the content of their writing" (Morrocco and Neuman, 1986, p. 243). Obviously, this separation is exactly what writing teachers wish to avoid. The "disengagement" of students from their writing causes careless errors and lack of interest, both of which make for poor learning of an individualized writing process and a poor product.

Evaluation of Student Writings

Writing teachers are always faced with the difficult task of grading papers. Precisely because writing is such a complex skill, based on so many areas of expertise, it becomes very hard to differentiate between those errors that are important to mark and those less important. Historically, most writing teachers feel a compulsion to grade every single paper. During his

first years of teaching writing, Graves (1983) felt it was his duty "to stamp out sin." Stamping out sin translated to marking any and all errors in students' written work. English teachers are notorious for carrying home bags and bundles of papers, papers, and more papers, night after night for just the purpose of marking them.

Instructors generally mark errors in two ways. First, they assign mechanical and grammatical drills to be completed for grades from grammar/usage texts; and secondly, they try to mark every error on students' products that the students are then expected to correct. No matter what the criteria is for assessing errors, it has been proven repeatedly that no more subjective area exists than English when it comes to grading papers. Many schools sponsor workshops to help teachers grade on a similar scale. During the workshops often a task is presented where a dozen English teachers will receive copies of the same example to grade. Almost without exception, the grades from twelve English teachers will range from A to F. One cannot help but wonder if in some of their inquisitions, errors are not "created" to mark, whereas in everyday usage, at least, no error actually exists. Indeed, a direct correlation can be found between red ink and failure, and all writing instructors know they can more easily justify the selected grade if enough ink is on the paper. The most difficult grade to justify is where very few marks exist.

Marking and grading writing have come under examination not only because they can be so subjective, but because these processes often do nothing to help the students create better products. Many blurry-eyed English teachers are surprised to learn and have a hard time believing results of research that have shown "there is little or no transfer of learning from isolated drills to actual writing experiences and that the time-intensive practice of the

teacher's 'error-hunt' does not produce more mechanically perfect papers, [even though] this 100-year-old tradition still persists" (Rosen, 1987, p. 62).

Obviously, part of the error-hunt history has evolved from society's expectations of what children will learn in English classes about how to write. Parents, who monitor their children's writing and graded papers, expect to see all grammatical errors marked (even though it has been proven that children do not learn from these markings). Parents at least want to make sure that the teacher realizes a mistake has been made. This is one way to grade the English teacher who is supposed to be modeling the best English possible.

Of course, punctuation marks and mechanical correctness are very important to the reader and can distract attention from the subject to the errors themselves, but "anyone who has read through a perfectly correct but perfectly empty student paper can verify the primary importance of what the student says regardless of how correctly it is stated" (Rosen, 1987, p. 63). The writing teacher becomes involved in a difficult situation. "Namely, how does a teacher focus on content in student writing and still ensure that progress is also being made toward mastery of the mechanical and grammatical structures of written English?" (Rosen, 1987, p. 63).

Poor writers or LD children who are very weak on many aspects of the structure of the language itself will absolutely stop writing as a result of persistent grading on grammatical or mechanical structures they have yet to internalize. LD children, in particular, may not have yet realized the basic differences between written and spoken English and in certain classes will pay dearly for that confusion. ". . . I write the way I talk," say basic writers, apologetically. That is, they draw upon the same inner generation of language for talking and writing; they do not "think writing," (Bank, 1984-85, p. 34).

Bank (1984-85) feels that "this characteristic is what makes basic writers beginners" (p. 34). The developmental ability to move from spoken language to written language "occurs first in rewriting. Later, for mature writers, it can be generated at will" (Bank, 1984-85, p. 34). This research shows how important it is for students to be at least "exposed" to a writing process. They must encounter effective "rewriting" strategies before they can use them to grow as skilled writers.

Studies performed by Calkins (1980) and DiStefano and Killion (1984) have shown that the more children actively engage in the process of actual writing, the better their mechanical and grammatical structures will become (cited by Rosen, 1987, p. 69). Realistically, teachers who are accustomed to marking errors will be uncomfortable relying purely on students' own internalizations of when colons or exclamation marks should be used. Clark (1987) has made suggestions for writing instructors who do not feel comfortable letting students keep notebooks or files of written work that are recorded as being finished, but not gone over with a red pen. His ideas for those who must grade papers are:

> Mark papers in black or blue or green, never in red.
> When you mark a paper, build on its strengths.
> Avoid useless comments like AWK for Awkward.
> Help students recognize the good in each other's work.
> Use short conferences in class to review a student's work
> Think of writing as a process. Instructors should not spend all their time on the final product.
> Confer more and grade less.
> Get students into the spirit of rewriting. Teach them to mark up and revise their own papers in a useful way.
> Make them care enough about what they have to say so they will be moved to perfect and correct their own work.
> Help them to understand that writing is hard work, not punishment. (p. 193)

Informal Instructor Assessment

Because of the nature of the sixth grade and the upcoming secondary levels, sixth grade teachers truly might be the last teachers able to affect

composition skills significantly and so, are at a critical point in which to check adequate composition skills of their students and remediate if necessary. Merely reporting that the weak students have been checked by experts and do not meet qualifications for a standard remedial program does not release teachers from the obligation; they have to individualize the instruction for all low writing-level students.

"Diagnostic assessment should--but seldom does--extend quite as much into the area of written work as it does to reading and mathematics" (Westwood, 1975, p. 64). The normal situation is that weak students are recommended for an "evaluation" by experts, based on teachers' referrals. Because the scores of reading and writing sections on standardized tests continue to decline each year for some students, "the number of students referred for writing difficulties increases during the upper elementary and post-elementary years" (Wiederholt, Hammill, & Brown, 1983, p. 215).

Classroom teachers are often afraid to venture into the area of diagnostic teaching because they are simply unaware of the vast resources available to them as instructors. However, the classroom teacher is in the best situation to evaluate low-level writing students because assessments for these students should include, "observations of the particular difficulties which a child may have in 'getting his ideas down on paper'" (Westwood, 1975, p. 64). Surprisingly for some instructors, the work that may give the most answers for an assessment may be occurring right in their own classrooms on a daily basis. The second shock for writing instructors who feel "an expert" might be more beneficial for their students is that "regardless of when the problem is identified, both regular and resource teachers tend to spend a lot of time evaluating and remediating the surface skills of writing (spelling and handwriting) but devote little attention either to the quality of the ideas

expressed or to how they are formulated" (Wiederholt, Hammil and Brown, 1983, p. 215). This remediation offers little assistance to those who really cannot compose efficiently and makes writing mere copying, which of course, is no assistance whatsoever to students who posess true difficulty with the writing process.

The basic source of information that can be used to evaluate students is from the "Directed Learning Objectives" that should be provided by all districts in a document format. Instructors can absolutely pinpoint what their students are expected to know when they leave that classroom in June. The first informal evaluation of students' work should be done with these. Sample Directed Learning Objectives for the sixth grade are contained in Appendix A.

Professionals imitate the classroom and use tests such as the Slingerland or TOWL, but teachers can easily use the these tests' Scope and Sequence Charts (Appendix B) on their own for an informal assessment of where students really should be at certain points in writing skill development. Obviously, this information can be used with or without the tests and can provide much information on how to procede in writing programs.

Teachers can also use a wide variety of informal level assessments that are available. This discussion has made repeated reference to skilled and unskilled writers. Certain attributes are representative of both groups and once a teacher can spot where the process is breaking down for certain writers, remediation of individual problems becomes easier. A chart depicting differences between the two groups during the writing process has been included in Appendix C.

And finally, because writing is a cognitive skill, any problems should be addressed developmentally. If teachers do not know what writing skills are needed for various developmental levels, they can not possibly hope to help

their students advance beyond worksheets and disconnected sentences. A developmental level of writing skills is included in Appendix D. These materials should provide at least a rough estimate of where weak students are in their developmental levels and provide some idea of what part of the process should be taught to enlarge their arena of abilities.

Instructors simply cannot rely solely on the system to help their weak writing students; our educational practices have brought us to our current situation where many students' skills are still far below national expections. All classroom teachers involved in teaching children to write should thoroughly examine every aspect of the writing process in their classrooms and evaluate the suitability of each step. Even textbooks, no matter how attractive the cover, how highly recommended they are, must be assessed according to current research findings to ensure that learning the writing process is being at least supplemented by their use. Writing instructors might sometimes be surprised at what they find.

A recent study examined three current language arts textbook programs in light of what is now known about the most needed aspects of a truly excellent writing program for children. The researchers assessed the "frequency of writing activities, the nature of the writing tasks, and the frequency of process-approach activities such as selected topics, prewriting, sharing, revising, and publishing" and found that elementary school students write longer compositions only once a week, the topic is selected by the text, no prewriting activity exists, no sharing or publishing occurs, and "revision, which is seldom suggested, focuses on editing surface features, not content" (DeGroff & Leu, 1987, p. 269). These results show that textbooks clearly are promoting the worst aspects of teaching the writing process and our students are the ones who pay with lower skills and little competence. Indeed, "it

appears that textbook publishers have made few concessions to the role of the writing process in developing student writing competence" (DeGroff & Leu, 1987, p. 266).

Instructors have to be concerned about the results of studies such as this. Additionally, teachers should evaluate studies that relate to their own local students. For instance, many districts are now publishing district report cards that actually measure and publicly report students' achievement test scores at various levels. Instructors can learn much from evaluating their own district. For example, a typical small city district recently published its "report card" of the district; the results followed current research. At the third grade level, 18% of the district's students were in the bottom 25% of Reading Comprehension, and 14% were in the bottom 25% of Vocabulary percentiles. By sixth grade, although the Reading Comprehension level remained fairly steady, Vocabulary had jumped to over 22% of the students scoring in the bottom 25%. For the sixth grade, Science and Social Science followed a predictable pattern. Since these disciplines rely heavily on reading, between 20 to 25% of the students remained in the bottom 25%. Unfortunately, although teachers can gain much valuable information from reading comprehension scores, this school district, like many others did not even measure writing skills during this assessment. Clearly, teachers, not programs, are the ones most in the position to help their students.

Discussion

This pre-service elementary instructor has had the unique experience of teaching and tutoring composition on the junior college and university levels. Most students at these levels had few difficulties with written assignments, even if their confidence about their potential performance levels was shaky. If only confidence was lacking, that usually could be remedied by my

praise, encouragement, and positive evaluation on a few writing assignments.

However, students occasionally would appear who were incredibly weak in writing skills on the most basic level, and it was very difficult to try and prepare them for college-level writing. They had little perception of any written conventions, and they presented nearly all typical difficulties of unskilled writers.

Although this writer was, at the time, lacking in actual methods course on the teaching of writing and was working purely from the gut reaction of what would assist growing writers, my feeling was that basic differences existed between these two groups of students, skilled and unskilled. The skilled group had somehow integrated writing with their thinking processes, and to the unskilled group, writing seemed almost to be a foreign language. Seemingly, no amount of remediation through grammatical exercises or other such textbook practice alone would promote these unskilled writers into the skilled group. After one or two semesters, if the student worked diligently actually writing all assignments and thoughtfully took into account all errors, sometimes their skills could improve enough that their writing level for other classes would be passable, not excellent, but passable. Indeed, it was almost as if they had 'lost' something they could never again reclaim.

The most interesting of the unskilled group were those who were preparing for the GED tests. Most of those persons were extremely weak and with only extraordinary effort could squeeze by on the test to make a passing mark, but every now and then some would appear who after being tutored for a session or two could almost teach the tutor. Their intutition about language was incredible, and tutoring only served as a framework for them to study and remember long-ago learned axioms and generalizations. Through some quirk they did not have a high school diploma, but the basic conceptual framework was there to enlarge upon and coordinate old and new information.

After several years, I began to wish that I could have the students earlier, before their language skills could deteriorate so miserably. Imagine my surprise when at the sixth grade level, the level I had selected as being a pivotal point in a child's written language, the same two groups of students existed! In fact, after grading papers, it was often hard to differentiate beween the junior college students' themes and the sixth graders' essays. Incredibly, if the students had a grip on the language at sixth grade, it seemed to stick, and if not. . . they were lost. The implication was clear. Unskilled junior college writers had not lost their feel and knowledge for the written language; it had never existed. The skill had not deteriorated; it had never taken "root".

As a result of much research on the writing process and many hours of grading and looking at students' themes, it would appear that all children who are not working up to their directed grade level objectives are indeed "disabled" and must be handled as such. No amount of time marking comma splices or subject-verb problems can make up for the lost conceptualizations of what the written language is, that it is different from the spoken, that it is directed by word choices that may be more difficult from the spoken, and that is an important tool in this society. These students and their writing products, no matter how meager or inefficient, must be handled with a sympathetic ear and a look towards remediation. Until these disabled students have successful experiences with the written language, the process of being able to communicate on paper will never take hold. They must have honest appraisal and evaluation, but not pages full of red checks that indicate everything from pre-writing errors in logical thought to revision suggestions. The errors themselves occur in different parts of the logical writing process, and no amount of confused corrections will alleviate this problem.

Additionally, because students are product-oriented, they don't usually study their marked papers and internalize their corrections, they just look for the "grade".

Somehow teachers, teachers who often are not good writers themselves, must instill a feel for the written language into students. My belief is that this motivation to assist students should come from what is known about the benefits of positive reinforcement and a genuine sympathy with all student writers and, especially, the poor writers. All of us can remember the pounding of our hearts when someone else is evaluating our writing in front of us. Even this writing instructor, after having a bad experience in graduate school, like many students, did not write unnecessarily for nearly two years after a professor worked over a research report. Writing is personal; it is growing, it is conceptual, it is owned by the person who wrote it and must be treated as such. We, as instructors, must take into account everything that we can to make writing assignments positive experiences for children. Disabled writers are different from children who are simply not producing after appropriate teaching of pre-writing practices through revision tips. Disabled writers are poor writers and, on top of everything, are anxious. Who can write anything worthwhile under those circumstances? We must provide suitable writing experiences for our students, suitable evaluation, and suitable remediation if they are indicated. We will not always have the option of referring poor writers to an LD class. Under current assessment terms, many who truly need the assistance will not be accepted anyway. It is our responsibility as educators to provide acceptable learning experiences for all, even those who do not profit from the normal situation. By knowing as much as possible, we can truly help students instead of wondering, "What's an elementary classroom teacher to do?"

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D. Writing and Spelling
The average student will:

1. Use a physical and organizational process for writing.
   - By grade 3:
     Reproduce manuscript and cursive letters and numerals.
     Write in cursive and read what he has written.
   - By grade 6:
     Write neatly, accurately, and with ease, speed and neatness.
     Reproduce words and groups of words in cursive.

2. Illustrate that writing serves many purposes of communication.
   - By grade 3:
     Realize that a written message communicates.
     Recognize that he is writing for someone to read.
   - By grade 6:
     Know for whom he is writing and why.
     Use descriptive words correctly for different purposes.

3. Choose the appropriate language for a desired objective.
   - By grade 3:
     Use and understand informal and slang language.
     Choose language which communicates with his peers.
   - By grade 6:
     Choose language which communicates with those who are not his peers.
     Choose language to achieve his purpose e.g.directions, write a story.
     Expand a sentence choosing specific words.

4. Choose the usage and structure which achieves one purpose of the communication.
   - By grade 3:
     Write a simple sentences putting in descriptive words.
   - By grade 6:
     Find the words he needs to write thoughts in complete sentences.
     Write a papagraph using a main idea and supporting details.
     Write simple sentences using statements and questions.
     Find words he needs
     Write sentences using descriptive words.

5. Recognize and use the four major areas of writing-narration, descriptive, exposition, argument.
   - By grade 3:
     Write one sentence of descriptive
     Write short original stories.
   - By grade 6:
     Write poems and stories of several paragraphs
     Write simple expositions such as how to do something.
     Write short stories of several paragraphs.

6. Write with a minimum of error.
   - By grade 3:
     Use a spelling vocabulary which includes common sight words
     Use capitals and end marks for simple sentences.
     Spell the words from the core spelling program correctly.
   - By grade 6:
     Spell correctly the words he needs to use
     Use capitals and end marks for all sentences
     Spell common sight words and easy core words.
     Use complete sentences in all writing.

b

from Slingerland Test

TABLE II. Scope and Sequence of Skills in Written Composition

	Grade 1	*Grade 2*	*Grade 3*	*Grade 4*	*Grade 5*	*Grades 6, 7, and 8*
Capitalization	The first word of a sentence The child's first and last names The name of the teacher, school, town, street The word "I"	The date First and important words of titles of books the children read Proper names used in children's writings Titles of compositions Names of titles: Mr., Mrs., Miss	Proper names: month, day, common holidays First word in a line of verse First and important words in titles of books, stories, poems First word of salutation of informal note, as "Dear" First word of closing of informal note, as "Yours"	Names of cities and states in general Names of organizations to which children belong, such as Boy Scouts, grade four, etc. Mother, Father, when used in place of the name Local geographical names	Names of streets Names of all places and persons, countries, oceans, etc. Capitalization used in outlining Titles when used with names, such as President Lincoln Commercial trade names	Names of the Deity and the Bible First word of a quoted sentence Proper adjectives, showing race, nationality, etc. Abbreviations of proper nouns and titles
Punctuation	Period at the end of a sentence which tells something Period after numbers in any kind of list	Question mark at the close of a question Comma after salutation of a friendly note or letter Comma after closing of a friendly note or letter Comma between the day of the month and the year Comma between name of city and state	Period after abbreviations Period after an initial Use of an apostrophe in a common contraction such as *isn't, aren't* Commas in a list	Apostrophe to show possession Hyphen separating parts of a word divided at end of a line Period following a command Exclamation point at the end of a word or group of words that make an exclamation Comma setting off an appositive Colon after the salutation of a business letter Quotation marks before and after a direct quotation Comma between explanatory words and a quotation Period after outline Roman numeral	Colon in writing time Quotation marks around the title of a booklet, pamphlet, the chapter of a book, and the title of a poem or story Underlining the title of a book	Comma to set off nouns in direct address Hyphen in compound numbers Colon to set off a list Comma in sentences to aid in making meaning clear
Vocabulary	New words learned during experience Choosing words that describe accurately Choosing words that make you see, hear, feel	Words with similar meanings, with opposite meanings Alphabetical order	Extending discussion of words for precise meanings Using synonyms Distinguishing meanings and spellings of homonyms Using the prefix *un* and the suffix *less*	Dividing words into syllables Using the accent mark Using exact words which appeal to the senses Using exact words in explanation Keeping individual lists of new words and meanings	Using antonyms Prefixes and suffixes, compound words Exactness in choice of words Dictionary work, definitions, syllables, pronunciation, macron, breve Contractions Rhyme and rhythm, words with sensory images Classification of words by parts of speech Roots and words related to them Adjectives, nouns, verbs—contrasting general and specific vocabulary	Extending meanings, writing with care in choice of words and phrases In writing and speaking, selecting words for accuracy Selecting words for effectiveness and appropriateness Selecting words for courtesy Editing a paragraph to improve a choice of words

TABLE 11. Continued

	Grade 1	*Grade 2*	*Grade 3*	*Grade 4*	*Grade 5*	*Grades 6, 7, and 8*
Word Usage	*Generally in oral expression* Naming yourself last Eliminating unnecessary words (my father he), use of *well* and *good* Verb forms in sentences: is, are did, done was, were see, saw, seen ate, eaten went, gone came, come gave, given	*Generally in oral expression* Double negative Use of *a* and *an*; *may* and *can*; *teach* and *learn* Eliminating unnecessary words (this here) Verb forms in sentences: rode, ridden took, taken grow, grew, grown know, knew, known bring, brought drew, drawn began, begun ran, run	Use of *there is* and *there are*; *any* and *no* Use of *let* and *leave*; *don't* and *doesn't*; *would have*, not *would of* Verb forms in sentences: throw, threw, thrown drive, drove, driven wrote, written tore, torn chose, chosen climbed broke, broken wore, worn spoke, spoken sang, sung rang, rung catch, caught	Agreement of subject and verb Use of *she*, *he*, *I*, *we*, and *they* as subjects Use of *bring* and *take* Verb forms in sentences: blow, blew, blown drink, drank, drunk lie, lay, lain take, took, taken rise, rose, risen teach, taught, taught raise, raised, raised lay, laid, laid fly, flew, flown set, set, set swim, swam, swum freeze, froze, frozen steal, stole, stolen	Avoiding unnecessary pronouns (*the boy he . . .*) Linking verbs and predicate nominatives Conjugation of verbs, to note changes in tense, person, number Transitive and intransitive verbs Verb forms in sentences: am, was, been say, said, said fall, fell, fallen dive, dived, dived burst, burst, burst buy, bought, bought Additional verb forms: *climb*, *like*, *play*, *read*, *sail*, *vote*, *work*	Homonyms: *its*, *it's*, *their*, *there*, *they're*, *there's*, *theirs*, *whose*, *who's* Use of parallel structure for parallel ideas, as in outlines Verb forms in sentences: beat, beat, beaten learn, learned, learned leave, left, left lit, lit, lit forget, forgot, forgotten swing, swung, swung spring, sprang, sprung shrink, shrank, shrunk slide, slid, slid
Grammar	Not applicable	Not applicable	Nouns: recognition of singular, plural, and possessive Verbs: recognition	Nouns, common and proper, noun in complete subjects Verb in complete predicate Adjectives: recognition Adverbs: recognition (telling how, when, where) Adverbs modifying verbs, adjectives, other adverbs Pronouns: recognition of singular and plural	Noun: possessive, objective of preposition, predicate noun Verb: tense, agreement with subject, verbs of action and state of being Adjective: comparison, predicate adjective, proper adjective Adverb: comparison; words telling how, when, where, how much, modifying verbs, adjectives, adverbs Pronouns: possessive, objective after prepositions Prepositions: recognition; prepositional phrases Conjunction: recognition Interjection: recognition	Noun: clauses; common and proper nouns; indirect object Verb: conjugating to note changes in person, number, tense; linking verbs with predicate nominatives Adjective: chart of uses; clauses; demonstrative; descriptive; numerals; phrases Adverb: chart of uses; clauses; comparison; descriptive; *ly* ending; modification of adverbs; phrases Pronoun: antecedents; declension chart—person, gender, case; demonstrative, indefinite; interrogative; personal; relative Preposition: phrases Conjunction: in compound subjects and predicates, in subordinate and coordinate clauses Interjection: placement of, in quotations

from Slingerland Test

b

TABLE 11. Continued

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grades 6, 7, and 8
Paragraphs	Not applicable	Not applicable	Keeping to one idea Keeping sentences in order, sequence of ideas Finding and deleting sentences that do not belong Indenting	Selecting main topic Choosing title to express main idea Making simple outline with main idea Developing an interesting paragraph	Improvement in writing a paragraph of several sentences Selecting subheads as well as main topic for outline Courtesy and appropriateness in all communications Recognizing topic sentences Keeping to the topic as expressed in title and topic sentence Use of more than one paragraph Developing a four-point outline Writing paragraphs from outline New paragraphs for new speakers in written conversation Keeping list of books (authors and titles) used for reference	Analyzing a paragraph to note method of development Developing a paragraph in different ways: e.g., with details, reasons, examples, or comparisons Checking for accurate statements Use of a fresh or original approach in expressing ideas Use of transition words to connect ideas Use of topic sentences in developing paragraphs Improvement in complete composition—introduction, development, conclusion Checking for good reasoning Use of bibliography in report based on several sources

Source: D. Hammill, & M. Poplin, Problems in Written Composition. In Hammill, D., & Bartel, N, *Teaching children with learning and behavior problems*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 1982. pp. 98–105.

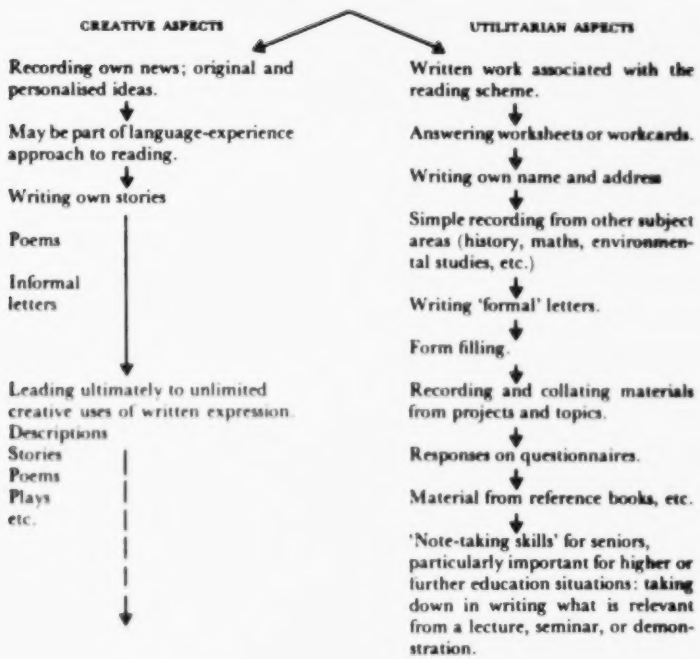
TABLE 11. Continued

	Grade 1	*Grade 2*	*Grade 3*	*Grade 4*	*Grade 5*	*Grades 6, 7, and 8*
Grammar						Noun: antecedent of pronouns; collective nouns; compound subject; direct object; indirect object, object of preposition Verb: active and passive voice; emphatic forms; transitive and intransitive; tenses; linking verbs Adverbs: as modifiers; clauses; comparing adverbs; adverbial phrase; use of *well* and *good* Adjectives: as modifiers, clauses, compound adjectives Pronouns: agreement with antecedents; personal pronoun chart, indirect object, object of preposition; objective case; person and number; possessive form Preposition: in phrase Conjunction: coordinate; subordinate; use in compound subjects, compound predicates; complex and compound sentences
Sentences	Write simple sentences	Recognition of sentences; kinds: statement and question Composing correct and interesting original sentences Avoiding running sentences together with *and*	Exclamatory sentences Use of a variety of sentences Combining short, choppy sentences into longer ones Using interesting beginning and ending sentences Avoiding run-on sentences (no punctuation) Learning to proofread one's own and others' sentences	Command sentences Complete and simple subject, complete and simple predicate Adjectives and adverbs recognized, pronouns introduced Avoiding fragments of sentences (incomplete) and the comma fault (a comma where a period belongs) Improving sentences in a paragraph	Using a variety of interesting sentences: declarative, interrogative, exclamatory, and imperative (you the subject) Agreement of subject and verb, changes in pronoun forms Compound subjects and compound predicates Composing paragraphs with clearly stated ideas	Development of concise statements (avoiding wordiness or unnecessary repetition) Indirect object and predicate nominative Complex sentences Clear thinking and expression (avoiding vagueness and omissions)

The Composing Processes of Unskilled and Skilled Writers

Stage	Unskilled Writers	Skilled Writers
Exploring	Do not consider exploring important or useful	Consider exploring activities useful and helpful
	Spend little time exploring	Spend more time considering and contemplating
Planning	Typically make no plans befor they write	Accompany their planning with note-taking, sketching, diagramming
	Prefer not to outline; make outlines after piece is drafted	
	Develop limited plans as they write	
Drafting	Write in a way that imitates speech	Write in a way that is less like speech
	Write without concern for reader	Show more sensitivity to reader
	Are preoccupied with technical matters of spelling and punctuation	Spend more time in drafting
	Do not pause very much	Frequently stop to rescan, reread, reflect
	Do not rescan or reflect	
	Focus on topic alone, not the whole rhetorical problem	Respond to all aspects of rhetorical problem--audience, medium, voice, etc.
Revising	Either revise very little or only at the surface and word levels	Either revise very little or revise extensively at sentence and paragraph level
	See revision mainly as "Error hunting"	Do not become unduly concerned with matters of form
	Spend so much time and energy on changing spelling and punctuation during drafting stage that they lose sight of larger problems	See revising as recursive and ongoing
	Often see revising as "making a neat copy in ink"	
Sharing	Are often reluctant to share writing	Are usually eager to share
	Share in order to receive reassurance	Share in order to receive constructive feedback See publishing and dissemination of writing as important

from Millikin University Writing Center, Decatur, IL


CREATIVE ASPECTS
UTILITARIAN ASPECTS
Recording own news; original and personalised ideas.
May be part of language-experience approach to reading.
Writing own stories
Poems
Informal letters
Leading ultimately to unlimited creative uses of written expression.
Descriptions
Stories
Poems
Plays
etc.
Written work associated with the reading scheme.
Answering worksheets or workcards.
Writing own name and address
Simple recording from other subject areas (history, maths, environmental studies, etc.)
Writing 'formal' letters.
Form filling.
Recording and collating materials from projects and topics.
Responses on questionnaires.
Material from reference books, etc.
'Note-taking skills' for seniors, particularly important for higher or further education situations: taking down in writing what is relevant from a lecture, seminar, or demonstration.

from: Westwood, The Remedial Teacher's Handbook, p. 129

END

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